DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 320 176 CS 507 177

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TITLE A Comparative Analysis of Young, Middle-Aged, and Elder Adults' Interpersonal Communication Motives.
PUB DATE Apr 88
NOTE 30p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Southern Speech Communication Association (Memphis, TN, April 8-10, 1988).
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Reports - Research/Technical (143)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Affection; *Age Differences; Communication Research; *Communication Skills; *Comparative Analysis; *Interpersonal Communication; Middle Aged Adults; *Motivation; Older Adults; *Sex Differences; Young Adults
IDENTIFIERS Age Dependent Measures; *Communication Strategies

ABSTRACT

A study compared interpersonal communication motives of three age groups: young adults (age 18 to 25), middle-aged adults (age 35 to 55), and elder adults (age 62 to 82). Three-hundred randomly selected volunteers completed a survey containing the Interpersonal Communication Motives (ICM) scale. Results indicated that all three groups used motives such as pleasure, affection, inclusion, and relaxation in communicating with others, while control and escape were less likely to be used. The three groups differed significantly in motive usage. Younger adults were found to use communication for the purpose of pleasure, inclusion, relaxation, and escape more frequently than middle-aged and elder adults. In contrast with young adults, middle-aged and elder adults tended to spend less time using control and more time using affection motives. Gender was used as an indexing variable for motives. One significant difference found was males' greater tendency to use control and females' greater tendency to use affection. This finding was consistent for the entire sample and within each age group. (Twenty references are attached.) (Author/SG)

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A Comparative Analysis of Young, Middle-aged, and Elder Adults' Interpersonal Communication Motives

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Paper presented at the annual meeting of Southern Speech Communication Association, Applied Communication Division, 1988.

CS507177

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Abstract

The goal of this study was to compare interpersonal communication motives of three age groups (young, middle-aged, & elder adults). Results indicated that all three groups used motives such as pleasure, affection, inclusion, and relaxation for communicating with others, while control and escape were less likely to be used. The three groups significantly differed in motive usage. Younger adults were found to use communication for the purpose of pleasure, inclusion, relaxation, and escape more frequently than middle-aged and elder adults. In contrast with young adults, middle-aged and elder adults were more likely to spned less time using control and more time using affection motives. Gender was used as an indexing variable for motives. One significant difference found was males' greater tendency to use control and females' greater tendency to use affection. This finding was consistent for the entire sample and within each age group.

A Comparative Analysis of Young, Middle-aged, and Elder Adults' Interpersonal Communication Motives

As "baby boom" members have aged, there has been an increased emphasis on understanding phases of change in the aging process. Perhaps stimulated by a surge of popular self-help books on coping with growing older, an increased availability of funds for research on aging, and emergence of the senior citizen as a social and political force to be reckoned with, the communication discipline is now devoting energy toward understanding how communication changes as people grow older.

Rationale

The relationship between communication and aging has been investigated with orientations originally designed for the interpersonal context. Interpersonal researchers have focused on how interpersonal interaction takes place, i.e., identifying categories of interpersonal behaviors, conversational structure, and themes of discourse (Rubin, Perse, Barbato, 1988). For example, interpersonal scholars have described actual message production during interaction (Bochner, Kaminski & Fitzpatrick, 1977; Lorr & McNair, 1965), the structure of conversation (Triandis, 1977; Triandis, Vassiliou, & Nassiakou, 1968; Wish, D'Andrade, & Goodnow, 1980), and frequencies of themes that occur in everyday discourse (Burgoon & Hale, 1984; Miller & Rogers 1976; Schutz, 1966). Relying on these findings, researchers of communication and aging have studied communication patterns and perceptions of elder adults in order to understand consequences of

the aging process.

Other than a side-bar treatment by Rubin, et al., (1988) to insure demographic generalizability for age, few communication researchers have attempted to explain the relationship between age and communication from a motives perspective. To this date, for example, variables such as communication apprehension (Downs, Javidi, & Nussbaum, 1987, 1988), power (Treas, 1975), style (Javidi, Dallinger, & Myers, 1988), stereotyping (Feezel & Hawkins, 1988; Waltman & Waltman, 1986), friendship (Powers & Bultena, 1976), life satisfaction (Woods & Robertson, 1978), loneliness (Downs, Javidi, & Nussbaum, 1987, 1988), nonverbal communication (Carmichael & Knapp, 1988), and relationship termination (Troll, 1982) have been used as bases for understanding communication among elder adults.

A recent study examined differences in communication motives as a function of age (Rubin, Perse, & Barbato, 1988). Reported results implied that communication motives (affection, inclusion, pleasure, control, escape, relaxation), with the exception of affection, are negatively correlated with age. However, this finding did not provide information to permit generalizable motive distinctions across age groups. For example, the negative relationships between age and motives could be a function of change associated with growing older, or the differences could be a function of differences in generations, i.e., young, middle-aged, or elder adults. For example, elders may have started with the same motives as the young adults and then change their motives over time. Conversely, is is also possible that dominant motives

that exist now have always been dominant, and age group differences exist as a function of the changing socio-environment. For example, young adults may have the same dominant motives they now exhibt when they become elders. Thus, an important first step in understanding the motive-age relationship is to determine if similarities or differences exist across age groups.

Purpose of the Study

The goals of this investigation were to (1) contrast responses to the Interpersonal Communication Motives scale in this study with those obtained by Rubin, Perse, and Barbato in 1988, (2) provide perceptual information concerning elder adults' communication motives, and (3) compare the results to motives of young and middle-aged adults.

Motives are assumed to be an operationalization or extension of human needs. According to Ambrester and Straus (1984), interpersonal motives are extensions of interpersonal needs. As humans, we all need to communicate to satisfy our needs. For example, Maslow indicates (1954) that we need to communicate for survival and the feeling of belonging. Schutz (1966) believed that humans use different motives such as inclusion, affection, and control to satisfy their communication needs. In describing these three motives, Schutz argued that people communicate to gain attention, recognition, and prestige (inclusion); to give and receive love (affection); and to influence others (control).

Relying heavily on Schutz's three interpersonal motive categories, Rubin, Perse, and Barbato (1988) developed an instrument for assessing interpersonal communication motives. In

this study, 127 students were asked to complete a one-day diary describing their communication behaviors. Five graduate students, analyzing the diaries, compiled a list of communication events and reasons for initiating communication. They used a coding scheme based on interpersonal communication functions (caring, relaxation, companionship, habit, pass time, entertainment, social interaction, arousal, information, escape, self-learning, convenience, social norms, control, and emotional expression). The 60 statements generated were then phrased as 5-point Likert-type items.

The statements were presented to 504 subjects. Responses were factor analyzed resulting in a 28-item, six-factor solution (pleasure, affection, inclusion, escape, relaxation, & control) measuring interpersonal communication motives (ICM). To provide convergent validity for the instrument, Rubin, Perse, and Barbato (1988) examined the relationship between the ICM, age, and sex. Most of the six communication motives were found to significantly correlate with age and sex.

Results of the Rubin et al. study provided useful information concerning the relationship between age and interpersonal communication motives. Since this was a preliminary study for scale development, replication is important. Consequently, the first research question posed in this study was:

> RQ1. Will responses from another sample be similar to those obtained in the initial testing of the Interpersonal Communication Motives instrument?

Since interpersonal communication motives among age groups were

not compared with demographic characteristics beyond simple correlations (age with each motive and gender coded as a dummy variable with each motive), an additional research question was asked:

RQ2. Are communication motives significant discriminators among young, middle-aged, and elder adults?

Given that gender is an indexing variable in interpersonal communication research (Javidi, Dallinger, & Myers, 1988), the following research questions were also posited:

RQ3. Are communication motives significant discriminators between males and females across the entire sample?

RQ4. Do communication motives vary as a function of gender across younger, middle-aged, and elder adult groups?

RQ5. Do communication motives vary as a function of gender within each age group?

Methodology

Subjects

Subjects were 300 randomly selected volunteers representing three age groups: young adults (n=100, 50 males & 50 females, ages ranged from 18 to 25), middle-aged adults (n=100, 50 males & 50 females, ages ranged from 35 to 55), and elder adults (n=100, 50 males & 50 females, ages ranged from 62 to 82). Most volunteers were current residents of the southeastern United States. Approximately one-third of the sample (middle-age group) resided in the midwestern United States.

Measures

Subjects were asked to complete a survey containing the Interpersonal Communication Motives (ICM) scale developed by Rubin, Perse, and Barbato and demographic items. As discussed earlier, the ICM is a 28-item multidimensional scale that measures the strength of six different interpersonal communication motives (pleasure, affection, inclusion, escape, relaxation, & control). The scale contains a 5-point Likert-type response option ranging from (1) strongly disagree to (5) strongly agree for each item. Examples of statements include "I talk to people because it's fun," "I talk to people because it relaxes me," and "I talk to people because I want something from them."

As reported by Rubin et al., the ICM has exhibited construct and convergent validity. Alpha reliability for the ICM's sub-scales ranged from a low of .71 for escape to a high of .80 for pleasure. Because the ICM is a new scale, it was factor analyzed in this study, using a principal components solution with varimax rotation. The factor analysis resulted in a six-factor solution (pleasure, affection, inclusion, escape, relaxation, & control) that accounted for 68% of the total variance. Factor loadings were consistent with those reported by Rubin et al. Moreover, alpha reliabilities of .82 (pleasure), .78 (affection), .85 (inclusion), .81 (escape), .84 (relaxation), and .84 (control) were established for the study.

Data Analysis

Simple descriptive analyses and a series of 2-tailed t-tests provided general information about the subjects' interpersonal

communication motives and permitted comparisons to results of the Rubin et al. study (Research Question 1). A one-way MANOVA and Multiple Discriminant Analysis was performed to examine differences among the three age groups for the six interpersonal motives (Research Question 2). One discriminant analysis was computed to determine if motives varied as a function of gender for the entire sample group (Research Question 3). A 2X3 MANOVA was used to test differences among the three age groups for the six interpersonal motives as a function of sex (Research Question 4). Three separate discriminant analyses (one per age group) were performed to determine if motives varied as a function of gender within each age group (young, middle-aged, elder) (Research Question 5).

Results

Research Question 1

Research Question 1 was concerned with determining whether results obtained in this study would provide confirmatory replication of the Rubin et al. study. Results are displayed in Table 1. As indicated earlier, factor analytic results in this

Table 1

Relative Ranking, Means, Standard Deviations, and t-test Results Comparing Two ICM Studies

MOTIVES (in rank order)	STUDY: Present (n = 300) Mean	S.D.	Rubin et al. (n = 504) Mean	S.D.	t - VALUE (df = 802) (2-tailed)
1. Affection	4.05	.62	3.85	.71	4.47, p<.001
2. Pleasure	3.83	.68	3.28	.80	10.26, p<.001
3. Inclusion	3.54	.86	3.25	.95	4.47, p<.001
4. Relaxation	3.39	.71	3.25	.85	2.47, p<.02
5. Control	2.81	.92	2.48	.89	5.18, p<.001
6. Escape	2.53	.95	2.34	.86	3.00, p<.01

study compared favorably with those in the Rubin et al. study. A six-factor solution was generated, with items loading similarly to those in the earlier study. In addition, alpha reliabilities for the motives ranged from a low of .81 (escape) to a high .85 (inclusion).

Relative rankings for the motives were identical for both studies. The present study also contrasted rank orderings for each age group (see Table 2). Visual inspection indicated that rankings for each group were also identical to overall rankings for both studies, except for the inversion of control and escape for the young adults.

Population variance estimates were computed for each motive

by combining results from both studies and using weighted sample variances to calculate the final result. Estimates of the population variances were: Affection, .456; pleasure, .574; inclusion, .842; relaxation, .640; control, .812; escape, .800. These variance values were used to compare sample group response means through a series of t-tests (2-tailed). The t-values indicated a statistically significant difference in each comparison, with the sample from this study exhibiting a higher mean score for each motive.

Research Question 2

Means and standard deviations for each age group's responses on the ICM are reported in Table 2. Homogeneity of variance among the dependent variables (six interpersonal communication motives) was checked using Box's M. A significant F-test was obtained ($F=2.21$, $df=42/208414$, $p<.001$), suggesting a lack of homogeneity of variance-covariance matrices which are pooled to form the error term in MANOVA. According to Barker and Barker (1983), however, MANOVA is not sensitive to violation of homogeneity of variance-covariance matrices when equal sample sizes exist within each cell, as in the present study.

Table 2
Means and Standard Deviations for Interpersonal Communication Motives Across Age Groups (n=100 for each group)

Motives (rank order)	Age Groups					
	Young		Middle		Elder	
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.
Affection	4.07	.59	4.14	.58	4.10	.60
Pleasure	3.94	.55	3.84	.70	3.70	.74
Inclusion	3.84	.78	3.40	.91	3.38	.82
Relaxation	3.63	.69	3.29	.89	3.25	.55
Control	2.83	.88	2.71	.99	2.81	.90
Escape	3.04	.89	2.35	.99	2.18	.64

MANOVA yielded a significant multivariate effect for age groups (Pillai's-Barlett Trace=.21, F=5.31, df=2/267, p<.001) suggesting that young, middle-aged, and elder adults differ significantly in their interpersonal communication motives. The follow up analysis (6 one-way ANOVAs) revealed that young adults use communication for pleasure more frequently than elder adults (F=3.21, df=2/295, p<.05). Young adults were also found to use inclusion (F=9.46, df=2/293, p<.001), relaxation (F=6.87, df=2/294, p<.05), and escape (F=25.58, df=2/282, p<.001) for communication more than both middle-aged and elder adults. No significant differences emerged for control and affection among the three age groups with the ANOVAs.

A multiple discriminant analysis (MDA) was performed to

define the discriminator function for motives with age group as the independent variable (see Table 3). The MDA produced one

Table 3

Multiple Discriminant Analysis for Age Groups by Motives
(Total n=300; n per group=100)

Motive	Discriminant Function Coefficient	Mean Response		
		Young	Middle-Aged	Elder
Escape	.86	3.04	2.36	2.18
Inclusion	.41	3.85	3.38	3.38
Control	-.37	2.83	2.71	2.81
Pleasure	.28	3.96	3.83	3.69
Affection	-.23	4.07	4.14	4.10
Group Centroid		.69	-.22	-.48

significant discriminating function for all motives with the exception of relaxation (Lambda = .79, X^2 = 63.47, df = 10, $p < .0001$). Although the MDA largely duplicated previously reported ANOVA's, the technique provided additional information for describing communication motive comparisons across age groups. An inspection of the group centroids suggests that the discriminator function primarily separates young adults from the middle-aged and elder adults. Specifically, young adults, in contrast to the other two groups, are likely to spend greater time communicating to satisfy escape, inclusion, and pleasure motives. In contrast

to young adults, middle-aged and older adults initiate conversation less often for control and more often for affection.

Research Question 3

Research Question 3 was posited to determine if gender was an important indexing variable for communication motives. Rubin et al. had performed zero-order correlations with gender (dummy coded with values 1 and 2) and each motive, finding significant relationships for each motive with the exception of relaxation. The concern in the present study was to determine whether the motives, considered together, would provide a significant discriminatory function. Thus, the entire sample was divided into male and female categories and a discriminant analysis was performed with motives as predictor variables (see Table 4).

Control emerged as the strongest discriminator between males and females (Lambda = .91, X^2 = 24.08, df = 4, $p < .0001$). For the entire sample, males were more likely to initiate conversation for control, while females would tend to initiate communication most often for affection and inclusion. A slightly greater use of the pleasure motive was characteristic of males.

Table 4

Discriminant Analysis by Gender
(Male, n=131; female, n=139)

Motive	Discriminant Function Coefficient	Mean Response	
		Male	Female
Control	.76	2.99	2.61
Affection	-.52	4.00	4.21
Inclusion	-.50	3.42	3.64
Pleasure	.30	3.84	3.83
Group Centroid		.32	-.30

Research Question 4

Since the results of RQ 3 suggested that gender could be used as an indexing variable for motives, Research Question 4 was used to examine motive differences when gender and age are main effects (gender by age with motives as dependent variables; i.e., six-cell design). MANOVA results, however, were not significant when gender and age was used to define groups (Pillais'-Barlett Trace=.043, F=.95, df=12, p>.05). Thus, results implied that motives do not differ significantly across the three age groups as a function of gender.

Statistical test results from RQ 4, however, required a cautious interpretation. Since the MANOVA design invoked at 2X3 matrix using gender and age groups as independent variables, the net result was an analysis of six independent categories (young

males and females, middle-aged males and females, and elder males and females). The multivariate analysis of variance technique, then, sought to identify the existence of significant differences in using motives across all six groups. Thus, F-ratios were an artifact of mean responses for each group divided by the variance across all groups. Mathematically, then, the MANOVA technique had the capacity to camouflage significant gender differences that could have existed within each age group due to the 2X3 design.

This was a an important concern since the earlier discriminant analysis (RQ 4) suggested that gender could be used as an indexing variable for communication motives use. Consequently, research question 5 was asked to determine if gender differences existed within each age group.

Research Question 5

Research question 5 was answered using a discriminant analysis for each age group. Gender was used as the independent variable, while motives provided dependent or discriminating variables.

Gender Differences for Elder Adults

Four motives were significant discriminators between male and female elder adults (Table 5): Pleasure, control, relaxation, and and affection (Lambda = .83, X^2 = 14.32, df = 4, $p < .005$).

Elder males were more likely to initiate conversation to satisfy pleasure and control motives than females; females used relaxation and affection motives more often than males.

Table 5

Discriminant Analysis by Gender
for Elder Adults
(Male, n=40; Female, n=45)

Motive	Discriminant Function Coefficient	Mean Response	
		Male	Female
Pleasure	.80	3.78	3.62
Control	.77	3.07	2.60
Relaxation	-.67	3.12	3.36
Affection	-.36	4.08	4.13
Group Centroid		.46	-.41

Gender Differences for Middle-Aged Adults

Inclusion, control, and affection were significant discriminators between males and females in the middle-aged group (see Table 6) (Lambda = .91, X^2 = 8.36, df = 3, $p < .04$). Females used inclusion and affection motives more often than males. In contrast, males were more likely to communicate because of a motivation to control.

Table 6

Discriminant Analysis by Gender
for Middle-Aged Adults
(Male, n=47; Female, n=48)

Motive	Discriminant Function Coefficient	Mean Response	
		Male	Female
Inclusion	.70	4.02	4.26
Control	-.60	2.87	2.57
Affection	.49	4.02	4.26
Group Centroid		-.34	.31

Gender Differences for Young Adults

Young adult males and females differed as a function of the use of affection, relaxation, inclusion, control, and escape motives (Lambda = .82, X^2 = 16.91, df = 5, $p < .005$; see Table 7).

Young males, as was the case in middle-aged and elder male groups, were motivated to initiate conversation for the purpose of control more often than females. In addition, males reported communicating more often than females to satisfy relaxation and escape motives.

The strongest discriminating variable was affection. Females initiated conversation more often than males because of affection. In addition, they tended to use inclusion as a motive slightly more often than males.

Table 7

Discriminant Analysis by Gender
for Young Adults
(Males, n=44; females, n=46)

Motive	Discriminant Function Coefficient	Mean Response	
		Male	Female
Affection	-.77	3.91	4.22
Relaxation	.64	3.72	3.56
Inclusion	-.44	3.80	3.91
Control	.42	3.02	2.66
Escape	.34	3.20	2.88
Group Centroid		.47	-.45

Results suggested that while motive use may not appear significantly different when young, middle-aged, and elder adults are compared simultaneously, when controlling for gender within each age group, gender differences do exist. Moreover, when gender is used as an indexing variable, regardless of age group, males and females are found to differ significantly in their use of communication motives.

Discussion

This investigation provided confirmatory replication of the factor structure and coefficient alpha's of the Interpersonal Communication Motives Scale reported in an earlier study by Rubin,

Perse, and Barbato. This study was initiated because of the lack of research comparing communication motives of elder adults to middle-aged and young adults. Further, the rising median age of the United States' population provided significant rationale for further investigations of the relationship between age and communication motives.

Conclusions

Reported research using the ICM scale suggests a relatively stable ranking of motive use across samples and age groups, with affection consistently ranked as the most often used motive. Affection is followed, in rank order of use, by pleasure, inclusion, relaxation, control, and escape. The same rankings existed in this study across age groups except for young adults using escape slightly more than control. Overall, respondents suggested that they did not initiate conversation in order to satisfy control and escape motivations (Mean = 2.81, control; Mean = 2.53, escape). In contrast, they indicated that communication was used to satisfy affection pleasure, inclusion, and relaxation motives.

Although the rank orderings are consistent, alternative interpretations are warranted. For example, one might argue that rankings represent a listing of most to least salient motives. However, the scale items focused on reasons for initiating conversation rather than the salience of the motives. Since the scale was developed with student samples and further testing involved large proportions of student subjects, type G error could have influenced results, i.e., similar rankings were due to

similar sample groups.

There is the possibility that control and escape motive items are socially unacceptable, particularly in contrast to the other motives. Items used to assess control reflect manipulative characteristics, e.g., "I want someone to do something for me, to tell others what to do, to get something I don't have." Escape items reflect behaviors associated with negative connotations, e.g., "To put off doing something I should be doing, to get away from what I am doing, because I have nothing better to do, to get away from pressures and responsibilities." Across all groups, control items exhibited the greatest amount of variance; escape had the greatest variance for younger and middle-aged adults and ranked third in variance for elder adults. Thus, there is a strong possibility of response bias due to phrasing of the question and truthfulness of subject responses. In addition, social values may suggest that behaviors associated with control and escape are negative, rather than positive, actions. In contrast, affection, pleasure, inclusion, and relaxation items are more socially accepted motives for communicating.

Motives that subjects reported using most (affection, pleasure, inclusion) were similar in that they reflected a need to secure positive, social stimulation: Fun, excitement, help others, show encouragement, someone to be with, makes me feel less lonely, etc. The least used motives reflected physiological and psychological needs for tension reduction: To get away from pressure, to unwind, to get others to get me what I want, etc.

Although the sample mean responses in this study were

significantly higher than those in the Rubin et al. study, any interpretation is tenuous at best. First, population variance estimates were based on the two studies. Second, the large size of the groups (n= 300 and n=504) will increase the probability of statistical significance even though numerical distance between the group means is not theoretically meaningful.

Differences Across Age Groups

It was interesting to note that younger adults differed significantly from middle-aged and elder adults on most motives. They used communication more often for pleasure, inclusion, escape, and relaxation. In contrast, elder and middle-aged adults tended to communicate more to satisfy affection motives and less often used control motives. These results were corroborated by inspection of Pearson correlations conducted in the Rubin et al., investigation. These differences could be the result of changes in motives as people grow older or differences based on a generation gap, i.e., that young adults in the 1980's have different motives for communication than their elders had when they were younger.

Using Gender as an Indexing Variable

Significant, consistent differences existed for the entire sample and within each age group as a function of gender. Overall, males were characterized by a greater use of control motives; females tended to have affection motives. To a lesser extent, greater use of inclusion was associated with females and greater use of pleasure was associated with males.

Within each age group, two motives consistently loaded on the discriminating function. Young, middle-aged, and elder males consistently reported that they initiated conversation for control more often than females; females, in each age group, more often than males reported a frequent use of affection as a motive. This finding is consistent with male and female stereotypes. For young adults, greater use of affection motives for females and greater use of relaxation motives for males were the most significant discriminators. Middle-aged males tended to use control motives while middle-aged females reported a higher use of inclusion and affection motives. Elder males were characterized by initiating conversation for pleasure and control more often than elder females; elder female motives were more likely to be relaxation and affection.

In summary, frequency of motive use was found to be a significant discriminator across age groups. It is important to note that young adults differed most from middle-aged and elder adults. For the most part, middle-aged and elder adults were similar. As expected, gender was a useful indexing variable for the entire sample and within each age group.

Limitations

The ICM was developed with a college student sample. Thus, there is the possibility of bias toward that group. Clearly, young, college adults are in an environment quite different than their counterparts in non-academic settings. In addition, college students tend to have less responsibility for others, while

assuming more responsibility for themselves. Those in a non-academic setting are exposed to more concrete ideas, probably working, typically married, and faced with a completely different set of pressures and, perhaps, "reasons" for communicating. The ICM has been employed with an implicit assumption that the categories are generalizable and equivalent across all contexts. This may or may not be the case.

In this study (and the Rubin et al. study) the ICM was used to compare age differences. Since the scale was developed with feedback from young students, results from this study could have been influenced by the nature of the scale. This is a particularly troublesome concern since young adults were found to be "most" different, whereas middle-aged and elder adults appeared to exhibit similar motives for communication. The researchers were left to ponder the question, "how different would scale items be on the ICM if middle-aged and elder adults had been used in the scale development process?"

Survey data gathering from elder adults is often problematic. Consequently, information is usually collected from interviews for various physical reasons of the elders. Such was the case for this investigation. In contrast, data from young and middle-aged adults was collected in group and classroom settings. The different data gathering techniques may contaminate analysis of subject responses. For example, interviewer paralanguage and non-verbal behaviors could influence elder responses.

Directions for Future Research

Limitations of this investigation suggest abundant areas for

further research. In particular, much more needs to be done in scale development. Using similar techniques as found in Rubin et al.'s study, ICM items should be derived from middle-aged and elder adults, in academic and non-academic settings.

This investigation did not consider the socio-environment and propensity for motive salience or intensity to vary with context. It may be, for example, that task environments stimulate different motives than social environments. At the same time, one might question the similarities vs. differences of young adults in academic vs. non-academic settings. These are issues worthy of investigation.

It seems likely that a reason or motive for communicating could be behaviorally operationalized in many different ways. Thus, communicator style constructs, in association with personality and demographic variables could illuminate many of the state-trait controversies associated with style and apprehension research.

The consistently low scores on escape and control could be an artifact of the wording of scale items. Many persons filling out the ICM while evaluating their reasons for communicating would probably tend to disagree since the items appear negative.

Further research needs to determine whether young adults actually differ from middle-aged and elder adults to the extent found in this study. Follow-up testing might aim at ascertaining similarities found between middle-aged and elder adults.

It was interesting to note that affection and control were consistent discriminators between males and females for the entire

sample and within age group. It may be enlightening to determine if this finding is consistent in future research. The implications for gender communication issues could be significant.

Although considerable, additional research on interpersonal communication motives among younger, middle-aged, and elder adults needs to be undertaken, implications of this study seem apparent. First, this study provided the information needed to describe middle-aged and elder adults' communication motives. Second, the results indicated that these two age groups significantly differ from young adults in communication motive uses. This information can be used by researchers of communication and aging as they extend pedagogical models of successful aging. Likewise, results provide implications for managers of change, particularly as they cope with the United States growing "older."

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